



54 x 52

"Reach"

\$16,000

Gary Ruddell was born in San Mateo, California, in 1951, and spent much of his time growing up drawing and painting. He received the BFA degree from California College of Arts and Crafts in 1975. The artist acknowledges the influence Bay Area figurative painting has had on his work, heightening his attraction to surface and materials, as well as the sensuality of objects. Over the years, he has developed a loose, expressionistic style, and cites Richard Diebenkorn, Gerhard Richter and Fairfield Porter as a few of his favorite painters.

Ruddell first attracted attention for his science fiction book covers, displaying a flair for depicting action and combining realistic figures with less representational backgrounds. His vision, and his talent, however, soon drew him away from this early commercial work, and for close to two decades now he has been exhibiting his paintings in solo and group shows in prestigious galleries nationwide.

Ruddell's large, square canvases are windows onto scenes both familiar and mysterious, stage sets on which characters play out their personal narratives. Figures, distinctly rendered, hover in an amorphous landscape, setting up a relationship between representation and abstraction. With a distinct lack of sentimentality, Ruddell ups the emotional ante of each painting through the placement of his subjects in the composition. In sharp focus against the blurred, abstracted space they inhabit, in turning away from both the viewer and each other, Ruddell's figures become symbols of the complex human experience.

"For me, the act of painting is a way of knowing a process, of seeing. I like to think of my paintings as stills in a film, suspended moments, a private glimpse into the human condition. I paint figures as I see myself interacting with objects, almost as if it is a play in progress... What I am after are images of man's relationship to his environment and his system of life in a ritualized role." - Gary Ruddell